

Choosing Skates 101



SKATECANADA
DUNDAS FIGURE SKATING CLUB

Hockey skates or Figure skates?

PreCanSkate/CanSkate/Parent & Tot

Skaters in the Learn-to-Skate programs are welcome to wear either hockey or figure skates. There are some important differences between the two types of skates, but in the early stages of skating, these differences really don't matter.

Hockey skates are fine if you think your skater will pursue hockey or will prefer to wear hockey skates. Hockey skates are harder to tighten and provide less ankle support so you will need to ensure you are able to tie them tightly and securely to the skaters' foot.

If you think your skater would like to figure skate or wear figure skates in the future, it is best to start with them so they don't have to "re-learn" later when they change skates. Figure Skates also provide a better fit and more ankle support which are beneficial when learning to skate.

Advanced CanSkate/Intro to Figure Skating

While both hockey and figure skates are welcome on the Advanced CanSkate sessions, skaters intending to pursue figure skating should make the transition to figure skates if they haven't already. Figure Skates and a proper toe pick will be helpful to achieve some of the skills on the Stage 5 & 6 levels of CanSkate.

Fitting Skates

Skates should fit more snugly than regular shoes, particularly around the heel. Choose a skate with adequate width for the skater's foot but no more than 1/2 size "to grow" in length. Too much space will make it difficult for the skater to control the blade and balance, and will not provide the same level of support to the skater's ankle. The skater should be able to wiggle toes inside the boot, but the heel should not move at all in the skate. There should be no more than one finger's width of space between the back of the foot and the heel. You should be able to pull the laces tight in the front, and the tongue of the skate should be wide enough to prevent the laces from touching the foot.

A good pair of skates will provide firm support around the ankle. When skates are laced up snugly, the ankles should be straight in the boot so that the whole skate/blade becomes an extension of the foot.

Moulded plastic skates are not a great choice. They prevent the boot from flexing properly to allow the skater the required range of motion. Plastic skates with buckles instead of laces may be convenient for the parent but they often come loose leaving the skater with no support.

Used Skates

Used skates are acceptable for the beginning levels of skating. Make sure to check that the blade is in good condition - do not purchase skates where there is visible rust crusted up the sides of the blades, visible pits, or damage to the metal itself. There may be small amounts of rust on the bottom of the blade which will be fixed with sharpening. Also, make sure that the skate will provide adequate ankle support. If there are large creases at the ankles or they can be easily bent with your hands, they will not provide sufficient ankle support

We want your skater to enjoy their skating experience. Investing in a proper fitting, quality pair of skates will give your child the best chance to learn, enjoy and excel.